

Granite Outcrops of the Lower Reaches

Outcrops of granite are dotted over the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge and throughout the western part of the Margaret River catchment (see Geology p.10) They tend to have a distinctive vegetation complex, comprising plants that love the granite soils and / or the extra moisture that is collected here. This might seem odd as the rock itself is often very dry and only supports a thin layer of soil, but water runs down off the impermeable granite, collecting around its base and in depressions on its surface. Moss thrives in soil pockets and runnels and can form dense swards that retain moisture and offer protection for a host of tiny plants. Due to this water-holding ability species found on granite are often those more usually at home in wetland locations. Granite outcrops provide a fascinating, unique and extremely delicate habitat that deserves special protection.



Kunzea ciliata # Myrtaceae Large Shrub

Although you will see this *Kunzea* on many granite outcrops in the area, it only has a very limited distribution in the Capes Region between Yallingup and Margaret River. It has large, showy flowers, usually pink but sometimes cream or white. **Oct – Dec**

Dodonaea ceratocarpa Sapindaceae Large Shrub

Dodonaea ceratocarpa is a shrub that is generally indicative of granite soils. It may grow quite tall, but is often wide and sprawling. It has broad, shiny leaves and small, reddish flowers that are much less conspicuous than its angular fruit, shown here. It is common on many of our granite outcrops. **May – Jul**



Hakea trifurcata Two-leaf Hakea Proteaceae Large Shrub

The presence of Two-leaf Hakea, when in flower, is given away by its smell! Like many Hakeas the insects that pollinate it are attracted by the flowers' strong aroma. Most of its leaves are reduced to rounded, 3-forked needles with spiny tips, but it also has broad, flat leaves. These are sometimes doubled over, resembling the fruits, a ploy that is thought, perhaps, to mislead birds intent on eating its seeds. It has a widespread distribution on various soil types, but is often a dominant species on and around granite outcrops. **Jul – Oct**



Allocasuarina humilis Dwarf Sheoak Casuarinaceae Large Shrub

Dwarf Sheoak has separate male and female flowers that are very similar to its larger cousin, *A. fraseriana* (p.68). These sometimes grow on the same plant, sometimes on different ones. It is usually found in sandy soils, and is very widespread throughout the southwest, but is common here on the granite outcrops along the lower Margaret River. **Any month**

Verticordia plumosa var. *plumosa* Plumed Featherflower Myrtaceae Small / Medium Shrub

From a distance, *Verticordia plumosa* may be confused with *Kunzea ciliata*, but on closer inspection you can see that the flower structure is different with the petals and feathery sepals being the prominent parts of the flower, rather than the stamens. The shrub itself is much smaller and more compact with crowded, blue-green leaves and dense clusters of flowers. This *Verticordia* has several subspecies and is widespread throughout the southwest. **Nov – Jan**

